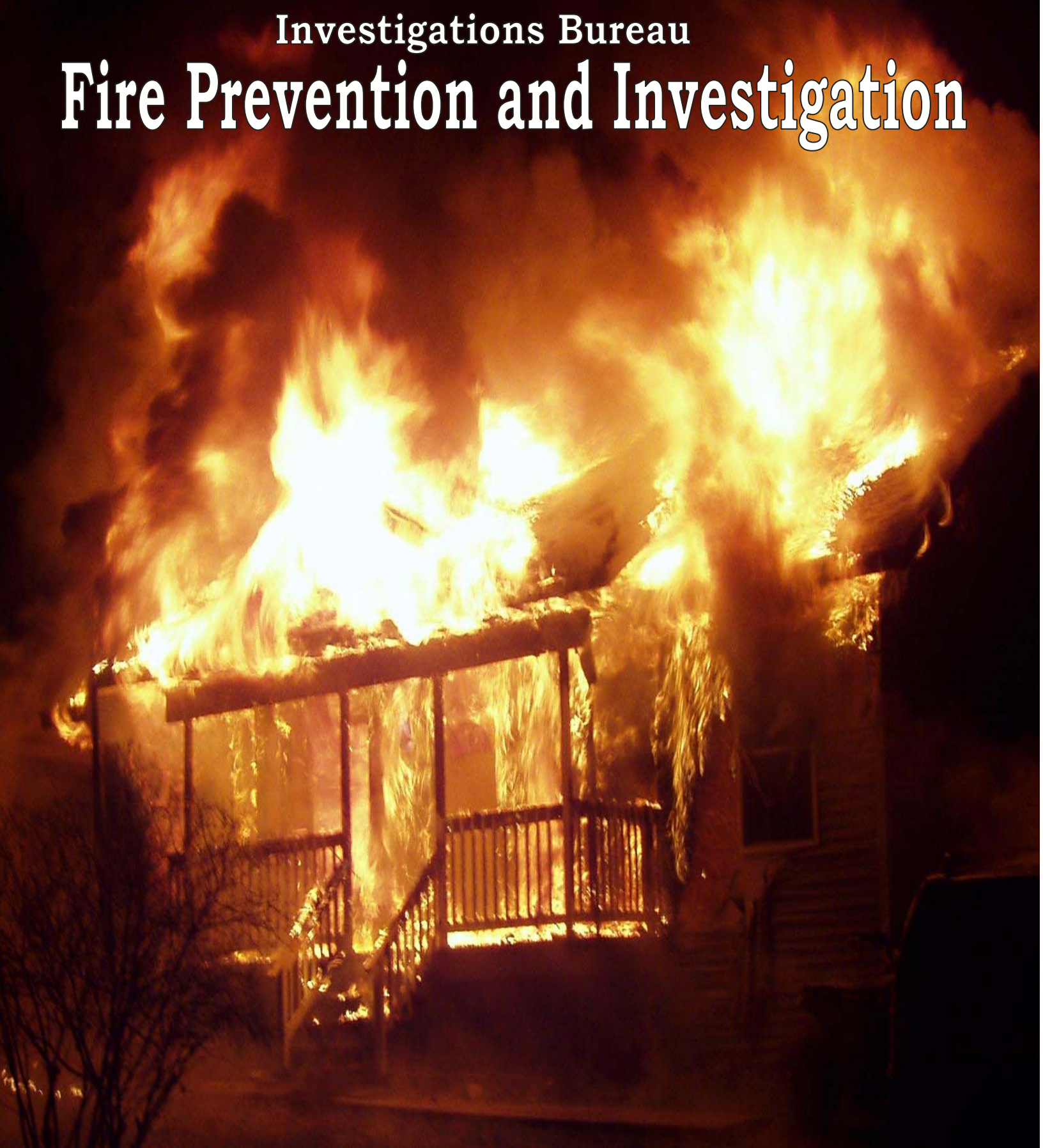


2005 Report

Montana Division of Criminal Investigation

Investigations Bureau

Fire Prevention and Investigation



2005 Report

Montana Division of Criminal Investigation
Investigations Bureau

Fire Prevention and Investigation

**Montana Division of Criminal Investigation
Investigations Bureau
Fire Prevention and Investigation Section**



Administrator
Mike Batista



Investigations Bureau Chief
John Strandell



State Fire Marshal
Allen Lorenz

Michael Allen Stotts
Deputy State Fire Marshal



In honor and memory of Michael Stotts
10/12/50 - 9/22/05

In 1979, Mike became a Deputy State Fire Marshal for the State of Montana, a position he dedicated himself to for over 25 years, proudly wearing badge number FM6.

Mike was a member of several professional associations as well as the Smith Valley Volunteer Fire Department and also served as a member of the Flathead Fire Investigation Team.

He actively participated in the NFIRS program and was able to assist many fire departments throughout the state with all their concerns with the program.

In Mike's honor the State Fire Marshal's Office has permanently retired Badge Number FM6.

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2005 Fire Report

From the Office of the State Fire Marshal

This is the second report I've had the pleasure of presenting to the fire service of Montana. Please take time to read and compare the last two years of work generated by the Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation, Fire Prevention and Investigation Section.

As most of you know, last year we lost a longtime deputy, Mike Stotts. His position will be hard to fill; however, we plan to get someone in the Kalispell office as soon as possible. We were very fortunate to hire Douglas Bean in December to cover the southwest counties in the state. Douglas has great computer skills and has taken over the NFIRS program that Mike Stotts was doing. Please direct any inquiries to him.

With five deputies traveling the state, we inspected more buildings in 2005 than ever before. Although our investigation numbers were up slightly, the good news is that the fire deaths were down from 17 to 12. A single-family dwelling is still the leading place where our citizens are dying. If you are not involved in a smoke detector program, I urge you to do so. We need everyone's participation to cut the fire death rate in our state.

As I travel the state, I see several fire-service related consequences of the population and economic shifts that are occurring. Places of growth face challenges of protecting new subdivisions, providing adequate water supplies, acquiring additional fire safety equipment and recruiting fire department members. Areas of population decline are facing money shortages, dwindling numbers of fire personnel and safety problems inherent with the increase in the number of vacant buildings.

As a state agency, we have to try and adopt codes and rules that everyone can live with. With that in mind, I would ask that those of you who live in growing areas, take a look at what is adopted and adapt your local regulations to better fit your needs. Generally, this will mean creating stricter guidelines in some counties.

In retrospect, the State Fire Marshal's Office had a good year and we look forward with hopes of a better year in 2006.

Thank you for your patience, support and cooperation. Please remember if you have questions or need assistance, do not hesitate to call your area deputy.

Allen Lorenz
State Fire Marshal



Northwest



Dawn Jones
Kalispell
406-257-2584

North Central

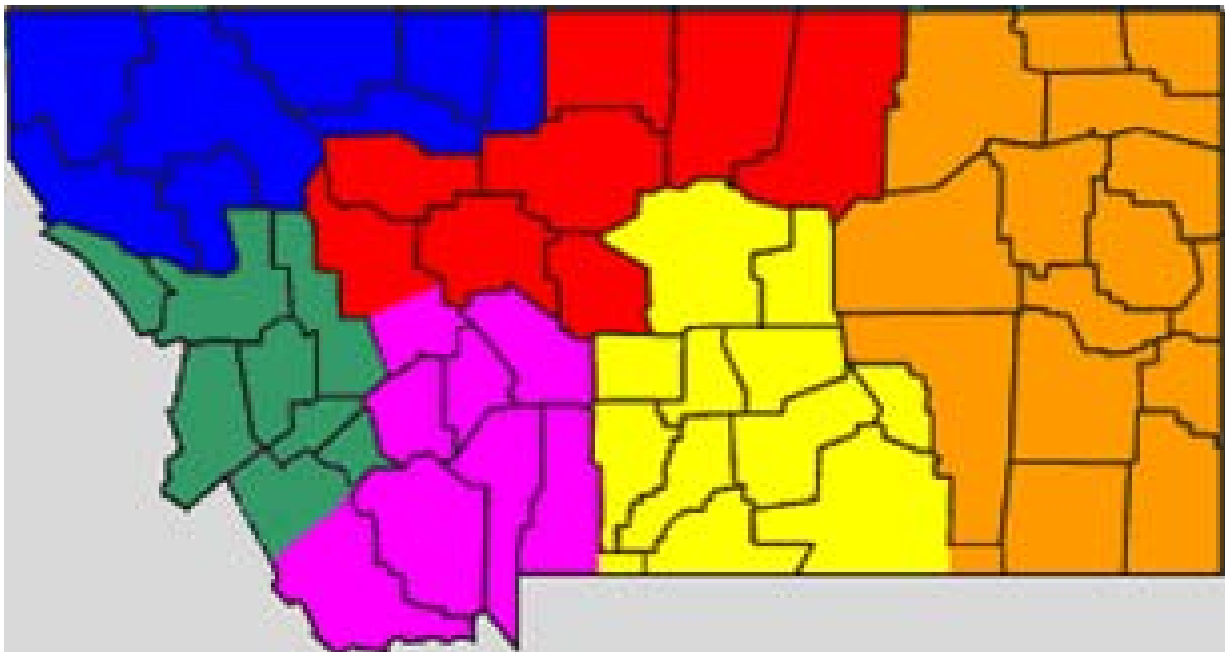


Dick Swingley
Great Falls
406-791-2710

Eastern



Jerry Smith
Miles City
406-232-9765



Southwest



Dick Larson
Missoula
406-329-1452

Southern



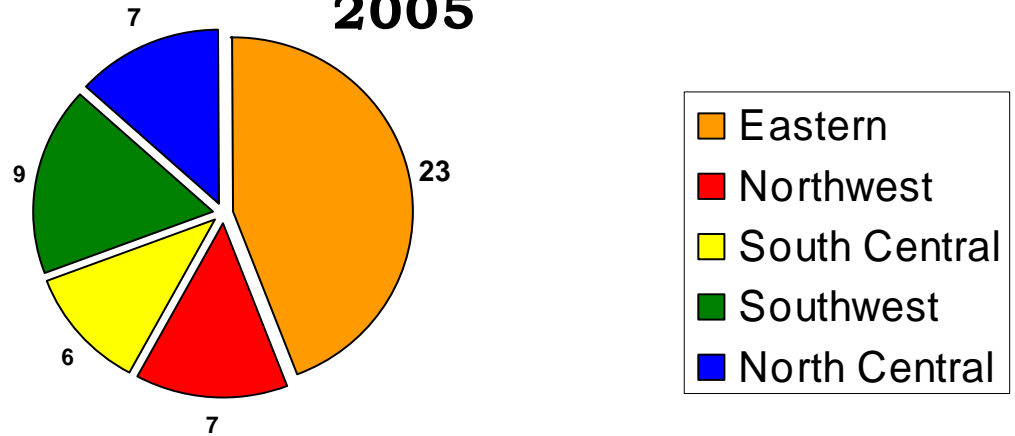
Doug Bean
Helena
406-444-1919

South Central



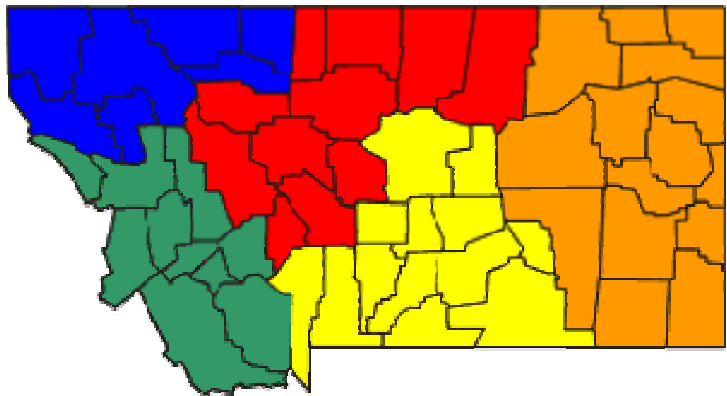
Sally McKenna
Billings
406-896-4388

Montana Fires Investigated by Deputy State Fire Marshals in 2005

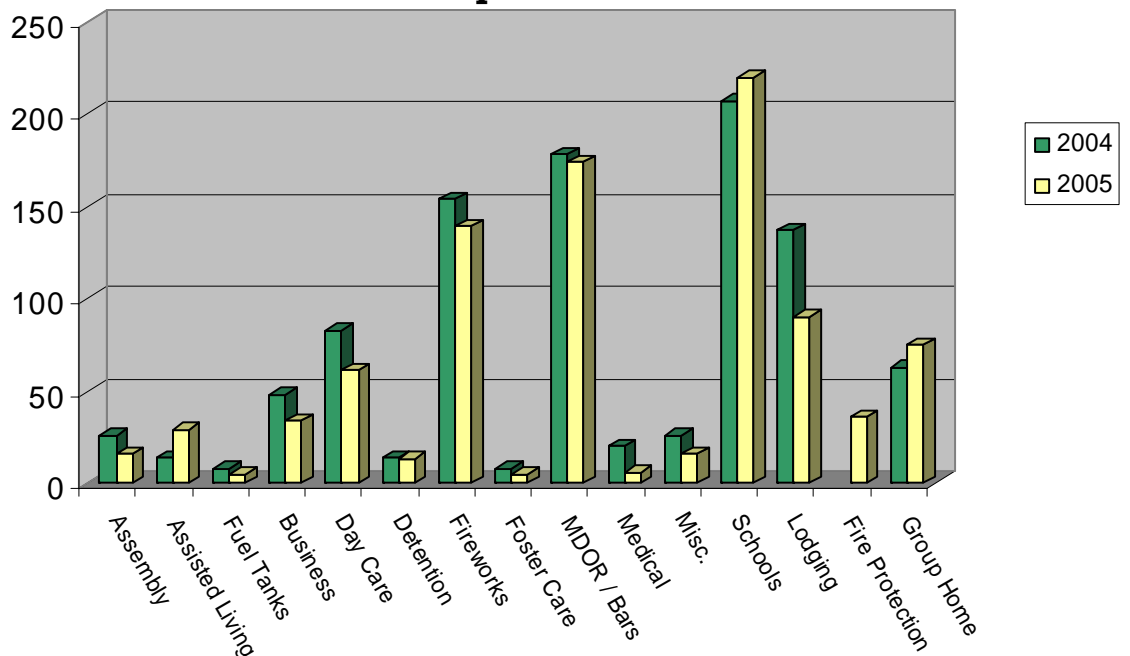


Note:

In 2004 there were only 5 regions. We have recently added a 6th region (south) which will be reflected in next year's totals.



Inspections



2005 Fire Advisory Council

Each year the Fire Advisory Council meets to discuss fire issues both past and in the future, along with safety issues, fire prevention education and other concerns that arise and affect the counties throughout the state.

There were requests for more fire prevention efforts through public education. Mike Batista made the suggestion to look into possibly making a 'fire kit' like the 'meth kit' as a tool for public education.

Other topics of discussion at the meeting were fireworks safety issues (see page 12) and water supplies as well as building code issues concerning all the new subdivisions going in around the state, and adopting codes that everyone can use and understand.



Attorney General Mike McGrath opened the meeting with a welcome.



Greg Megaard of the Bozeman Fire Department was nominated as the Chairman of the Advisory Council.



Council Members

Mike McGrath, Mike Batista, John Strandell, Allen Lorenz, Bob Rajala, Randy McCamley, Jerry Blythe, Tim Lloyd, Greg Megaard, Cheryl Liedle, Steve Larson, Scott Mendenhall, Bob Bergren.

NFIRS

National Fire Incident Reporting System

The State Fire Marshal's office was very fortunate to have Jodi Warneke of the Great Falls Division of Criminal Investigations jump in and take over the administration of the NFIRS program until we hired Deputy State Fire Marshal Doug Bean, who is now working with the system.

Jodi was able to assist fire departments around the state in accessing the system and also was available to answer their questions relating to system use.



Thank you Jodi !

Recently Jodi was presented with an inscribed clock and pen set for her desk in appreciation for all of her efforts and hard work. She will continue to assist with the NFIRS program and can be reached in her office.



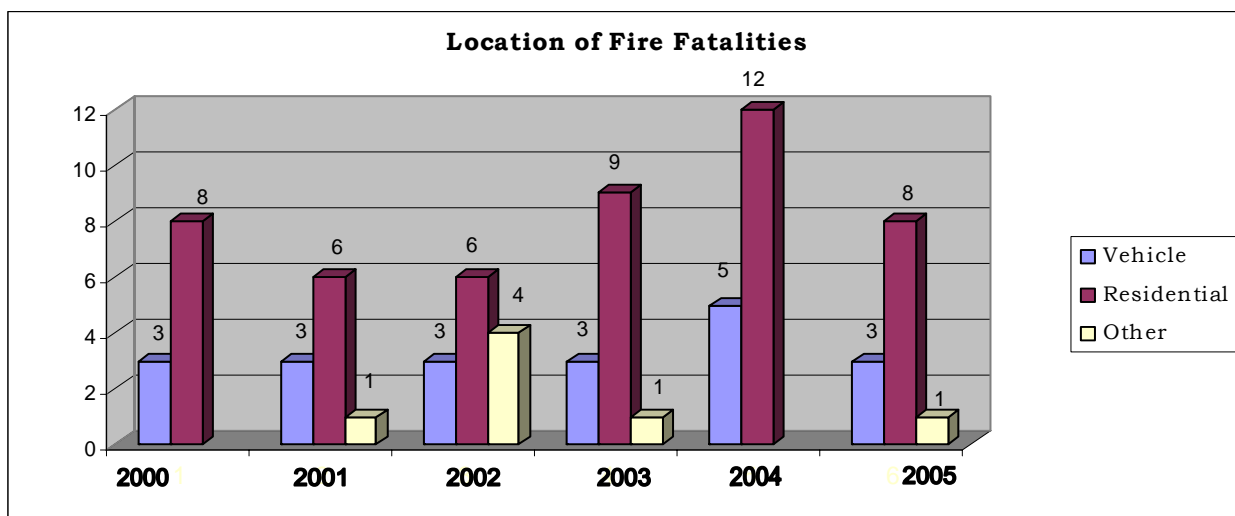
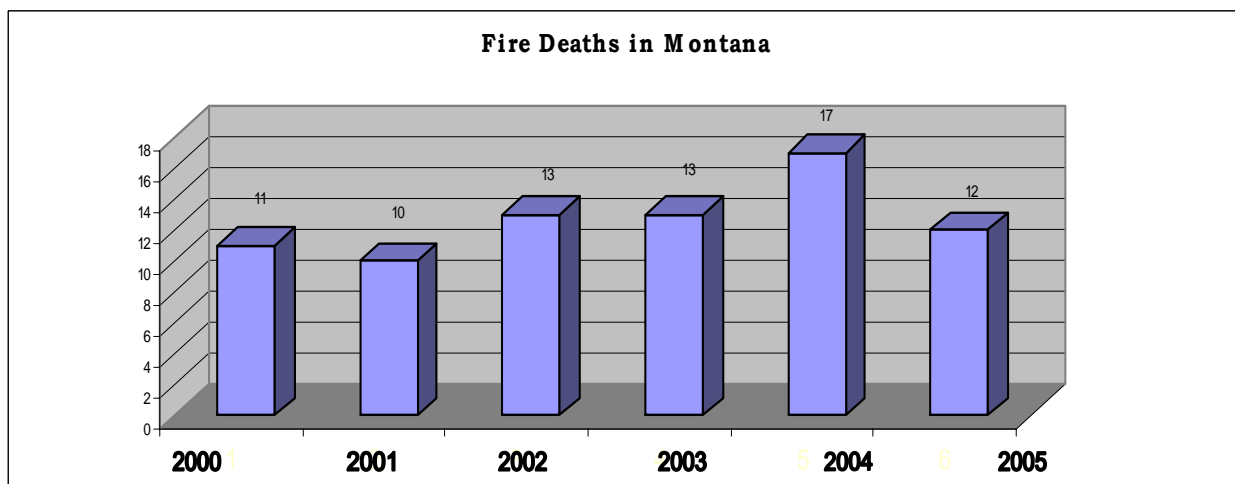
The State Fire Marshal's office is responsible for managing the **National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS)** for the State of Montana. We would like to encourage all departments to utilize the NFIRS system to their utmost ability. The Fire Marshal's office has set up an e-mail account to process your NFIRS submittals, reset your password and answer your questions.

We recommend that departments log into the NFIRS system on a monthly basis even if they do not have an incident to log, and avoid having your account defaulting to an INACTIVE status. Once logged in you may check a box marked "no activity" and log out. This will keep your account active for when you will need it.

If your account does become inactive please contact Doug Bean at dojnfirs@mt.gov or by phone at (406) 444-1919 to have it reactivated. He will be available during the week to address NFIRS requests. Please include in the subject line the nature of your request.

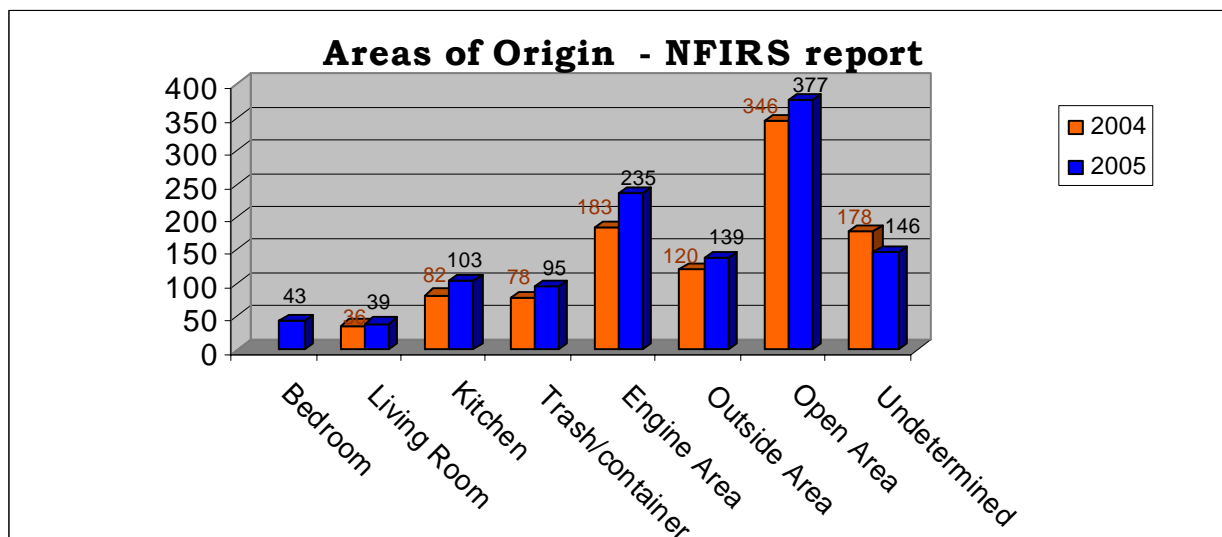
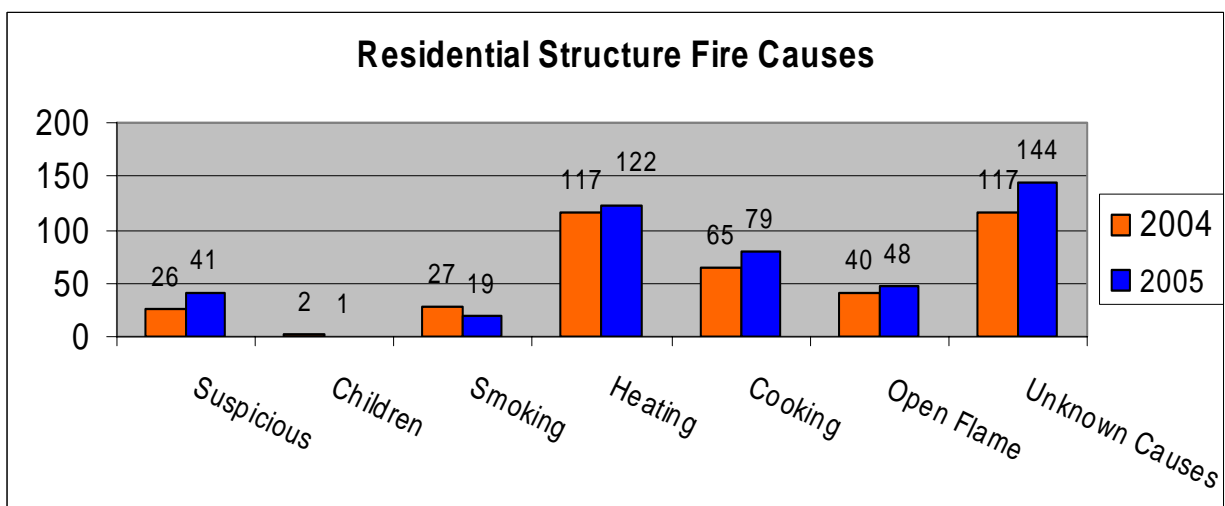
The current version of NFIRS may be obtained by submitting a request to dojnfirs@mt.gov or going to <https://www.nfirs.fema.gov>.

Fire Fatalities Across Montana

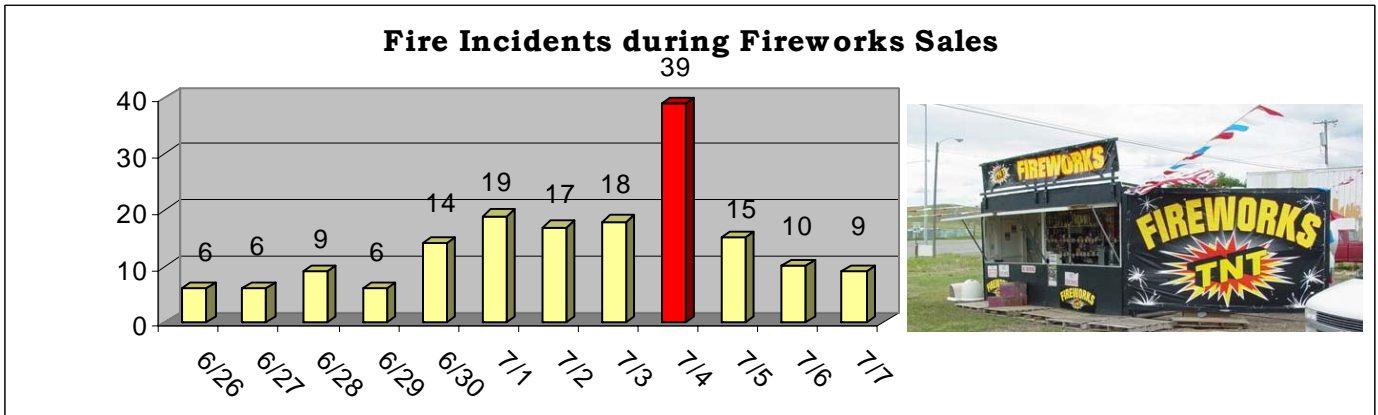


TOP 10 NFIRS INCIDENT REPORTING DEPARTMENTS FOR 2005

Place	Department	Calls
1	Billings Fire Department	11091
2	Great Falls Fire Rescue	4962
3	Helena Fire Department	2575
4	City of Kalispell	2088
5	Missoula Rural Fire Department	2048
6	Missoula Fire Department	1106
7	Central Valley Rural Fire Dist	700
8	Lewistown Fire Department	606
9	Lockwood RFD	588
10	Anaconda Fire Department	535



Fire Incidents surrounding July 4th 2005



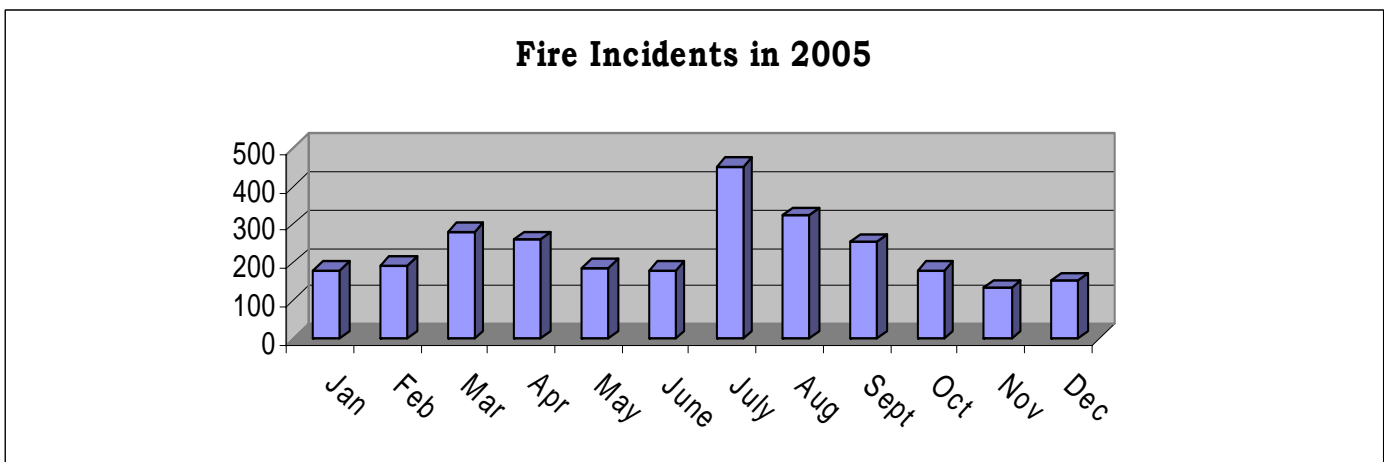
As a fire service priority, the 4th of July comes and goes so quickly, its tragedies seem to get lost in the shuffle.

This past season the State of Montana had several injuries including two deaths, along with one person permanently paralyzed from the neck down and a report of another losing some fingers as the direct result of fireworks. There were possibly more injuries that were not publicized, but because of confidentiality regulations, it is difficult to track these emergency room visits to get an accurate count.

In the past the Montana fire service has made rule changes to address fireworks incidents. Persons under the age of 18 are no longer allowed to sell fireworks following an incident of the death of two high school students in a Kalispell fireworks stand fire/explosion. After investigating this year's tragedies, a consideration to the possible changes of the following rules may help eliminate some of these tragedies.

- 1) Should we require testing and licensing of pyrotechnicians working on public permits?
- 2) Should we replace 'shall' instead of 'may' in the statute for obtaining public display permits?
- 3) Is it time to ban sparklers that are compounded with oxidizers?

Rule changes are a cumbersome process but members of the Montana fire service have the responsibility to see that these tragedies were not in vain.



Fire Prevention and Education Classes

During this past year, the Fire Prevention and Investigation Section put on several classes. We are continuing to work towards educating the public to keep them informed of fire life-and-safety precautions, keeping our communities as safe as possible.

Classes that were offered during the past year were:

- 1) Basic Instruction Course**
- 2) Fire Cause Determination Awareness**
- 3) Fire Awareness Class**
- 4) Basic Code Class**
- 5) Class Presentation to Fire Science Students**
- 6) Fire Origin and Cause Investigation Course**
- 7) Safety and Evacuation Class**
- 8) Fire Suppression Systems**



These classes were well attended.

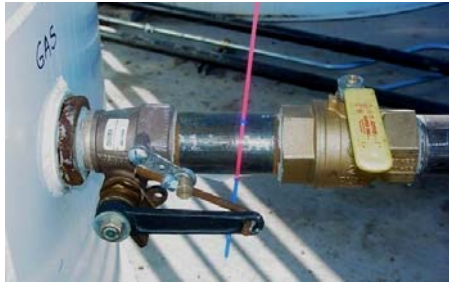
If there are departments or organizations that would like to host or attend one of these classes, please contact your area Deputy State Fire Marshal.

At this time the Fire Prevention and Investigation Section relies on public announcements on the radio and in newspapers to deliver the limited amount of public education. The most effective public education is delivered by the area Deputy Fire Marshals while conducting inspections, talking with school personnel, tavern owners and managers, personnel of day care centers and other individuals.



ABOVE GROUND STORAGE TANKS

The following pages are codes for inspecting different facilities that can be used as guidelines when requesting an inspection.



Fire Valve

All valves to above ground tanks shall have an approved fusible linked fire valve.



Storage Tank Label

All approved above ground storage tanks shall have an approved Underwriters Laboratories seal.



Piping (unapproved)

Wood blocks are not allowed to be used as pipe supports.

Piping

All piping at an above ground facility shall be sitting on non-combustible materials (Note: metal and concrete)



LIQUOR LICENSE INSPECTIONS



When doing Liquor license inspections, the Fire Marshal's Office inspects small retail grocery stores to the big box chain stores; small rural bars to the large combination bars, casino and restaurants, convenience store/gas station, the Town Pumps with convenience store, casino, fast food, truckers' lounges and sometimes motels.



With the wide variety of liquor licenses issued in Montana, it could take thirty minutes or several hours to inspect a facility.

The State Fire Marshal's office inspects these premises when there is a new liquor license issued, the existing liquor license is being sold or transferred, or upon special request.



With the inspection of an existing liquor license, the premise may be one that has been in business for decades under the same ownership and the last time it was inspected was when the building was built, or in some cases it has never been inspected.

As when inspecting any other type of facility, it is important to see the owner or representative before beginning an inspection and encourage him or her to accompany you on the inspection. While conducting the inspection the violations noted can be explained so that the owner or his/her representative can correct the violations before the facility is re-inspected.



Day Care Facilities



One of the responsibilities of the Montana State Fire Marshal's Office is to make sure that day-care facilities are being maintained in a safe condition. We do this by inspecting and enforcing fire and life safety codes.

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services [DPHHS] Day Care Licensing has established three main categories of facilities.

- **The Family Day Care** is limited to 6 children, which would include the care provider's own children. This type of day care is not required to be inspected or approved by building or fire code authorities.
- **Group Day Care** is a licensed facility that can care for up to 12 children and must have at least two care-providers in attendance. Because Group Day Care facilities can operate in residential areas, an inspection is not required.
- **Day Care Centers** is the third category, which are licensed for more than 12 children. Day Care Centers must be inspected.

Building and fire code officials have been involved in the process when Day Care Licensing is updating and revising its licensing requirements. We all have something to contribute in knowledge and experience.



Tourist Homes

Fire and Life Safety Recommendations and Guidelines

Facilities rented out to accommodate overnight guests such as “tourist homes”, “guest homes”, “Bed and Breakfast” or “vacation rentals” are, by any other name... considered:

Public Accommodations



The following is a guideline of “good fire and life safety practices”, to be utilized as an inspection tool for these types of facilities.

Locks: Doors shall be openable from the inside without any special knowledge or effort. Doorknobs shall be of the type that will open with 1 motion.



Premise Identification- Approved numbers shall be visible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers shall contrast with their background.

Emergency evacuation plans shall be posted. Evacuation plans shall include two emergency exit routes, the placement of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.



A telephone shall be provided and accessible. Emergency information and telephone numbers must be posted. Information shall include all emergency numbers for law enforcement, fire and ambulance and shall include clear, concise directions to the calling location.



A fire extinguisher with a minimum rating of at least 2A10BC shall be mounted in a readily visible and accessible location. There shall be at least one fire extinguisher located on each floor level.

Smoke detectors shall be installed in each sleeping room and in the areas leading to the sleeping rooms.



A log shall be kept of the testing and maintenance of smoke detectors. The detectors shall be tested once per month, and if battery operated, the batteries shall be changed at least once per year.

Every room used for sleeping purposes shall be provided with a secondary means of escape. When utilizing a window as a secondary means of egress, the complying escape window shall meet the correct safety standards.

Electrical extension cord use is limited to portable appliances. Electrical sub-panels shall be accessible and breakers labeled.

Pressure relief valves on water heaters have installed piping that terminates into a drain and/or extends down to within six inches of the floor. (Plumbing code)



This particular fire was caused by a cigarette that was discarded onto the dry bushes. The white foam was used to extinguish this fire.



This residential fire resulted in a fatality.